

DASP Digest



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Disaster Assistance Support Program

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Highlights

DASP supports OFDA response to Cyclone Sidr in Bangladesh. *Page 1*

DASP provides link to capacity building resources for Europe. *Page 5*

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USAID Administrator Henrietta Fore addresses the press on the tarmac at Zia International Airport, Dhaka, following the delivery of OFDA-funded relief commodities.



DASP Digest is a quarterly report produced by the Disaster Assistance Support Program (DASP), a partnership between the U.S. Forest Service International Programs and USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance. For more information please visit our website at www.fs.fed.us/global/.

Bangladesh: Cyclone Sidr

On November 15, Tropical Cyclone Sidr made landfall in southern Bangladesh, resulting in about 3,500 deaths according to media reports. The Government of Bangladesh (GOB) evacuated approximately 3.2 million people before the cyclone hit. On November 16, U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Geeta Pasi declared a disaster and OFDA provided more than \$6.5 million in life-saving humanitarian assistance including relief commodities, water and sanitation programs, and emergency shelter. OFDA deployed a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) and activated a Response Management Team (RMT) to coordinate this assistance.

DASP provided a variety of support throughout OFDA's

response to Cyclone Sidr. Core staff members Laura Chapman and Stephanie Savolaine served on the RMT (November 20 – 30, 2007), filling the External Liaison Coordinator and Deputy Manager for Planning positions, respectively. DASP also accessed detailers to support the RMT's Communications and Records function, including Justin Jager (November 21 – 30) and Matt Zumstein (November 29 – December 12).

After the demobilization of the DART and RMT, DASP coordinated a comprehensive After Action Review of OFDA's response in cyclone-affected areas of Bangladesh. DASP prepared and distributed an anonymous on-line survey about USAID's relief operations, the implementation of the new RMT Policy and Procedures, and coordination with partners. Fifty four people responded. DASP also conducted interviews with key staff involved in the response and held a DART work group meeting on January 23, 2008. The outcomes of these initiatives helped frame the agenda for a one-day after action workshop which DASP facilitated on February 20, 2008. The thematic areas discussed during the workshop were: Preparedness and

Mobilization of OFDA; OFDA Mandate and Role in Bangladesh; Managing the Mission's Expectations regarding Press, Reporting, and Transition; and Coordination with the Department of Defense. The workshop provided a platform to review tools and templates associated with the new RMT Policy and Procedures, namely the Response Planning Call and Response Action Plan, and the transition planning tool which was developed by OFDA's transition working group. A report from OFDA's after action review should be available in May.

DASP also helped to coordinate arrangements for a USAID Mission-led after action review in Dhaka, which was facilitated by Bob Walker from OFDA's Training Unit. As a result of the Mission's interest in improving its response capability, Dhaka is the venue for an upcoming regional Mission Disaster Preparedness (MDP) Consultation for Mission Disaster Relief Officers from Asia. This will allow additional staff from Dhaka to participate and provides an excellent case study. Five staff members from USAID/Bangladesh, including the Mission Director and Deputy, have taken previous OFDA MDP training.





RoLo kits contain a variety of useful products for field survival. A staff favorite is duct tape ... so many uses, so little time.

Your RoLo Kit: Don't Leave Home Without It

Through a sub-agreement with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), DASP has helped OFDA to develop a field support pack for staff members traveling to remote locations for extended periods of time.

Remote Location Kits (RoLos) contain a variety of critical items to support life and work in primitive environments, including a tent, sleeping bag, water purifier, Meals Ready to Eat (MREs), utility knife,

flashlight, candles, and ... of course ... duct tape. The packs are designed to be modular, allowing travelers to customize the contents based on the requirements of a specific field assignment. A complete pack can meet a traveler's basic needs for shelter, safety, first aid and basic hygiene for up to several weeks.

In March 2008, BLM purchased supplies and built a total of 50 new kits which will

be stockpiled in the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) Returns Warehouse in Boise, ID. These kits will be available for expedited delivery to Washington, DC, to supply outgoing field teams. Approximately 20 RoLo kits are stored in Washington, DC at OFDA's Quincy Street facility.

Following a deployment, durable items are returned to NIFC, where BLM will thoroughly refurbish and restock the packs.

Preparedness for USAID/Serbia

OFDA and USAID/Serbia held disaster preparedness consultations in Belgrade from November 13-16, 2007. The consultations were led by USAID Serbia's Mission Disaster Relief Officer (MDRO); the OFDA Disaster Operations Specialist for Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia; and DASP Mission Disaster Preparedness Coordinator Chris Leonardo.

Post experienced large staff turnover during the summer of 2007, and believed it opportune to reacquaint staff with USG roles, responsibilities, and procedures for disaster response. The consultation included meetings with key members of USAID, the Department of State, the Department of Defense at Post, first responder organizations including the Serbian Red Cross and the United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees, and other members of the international development community.

The week was capped off with a workshop attended by twenty-six people representing a cross section of the U.S. Government (USG) community including the Department of State, the Department of Defense, USAID, and representatives from USAID/Serbia's three field offices (Nis, Novi Pazar, and Vranje). The Serbia Desk Officer from USAID's Europe and Eurasia Bureau in Washington, DC and the alternate MDRO from USAID/Montenegro also participated.

USAID/Serbia's MDRO Walter Doetsch found the technical assistance to be particularly valuable for two reasons: "1) the workshop brought together people who normally

don't work with each other and establish(ed) the relationships necessary to facilitate a USG response; and 2) the revision of the MDRP was critical to establishing and clarifying roles and responsibilities of the various actors both within the USG and with our partners ... (T)he technical assistance we received strengthened the USG's planning and response capacity at a particularly critical time in Serbia."



Local populations prepare for floods in Serbia.

Good Eggs Help Trainees Build Strong Teams

During the reporting period, DASP conducted two four-day *Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) and Response Management Team (RMT) Essentials* courses (October 30 – November 2, 2007 and February 5 – 8, 2008).

A total of 45 participants completed the training, representing a variety of organizations including OFDA, USAID's Africa Bureau (AFR), Office of Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA), Office of Global Health (GH), Office of Food for Peace (FFP), Office of Democracy and Governance (DG), and Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI); State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and

Migration (PRM) and Office of Conflict, Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS); the National Security Council; the Bureau of Land Management; the US Forest Service; and Fairfax County Fire and Rescue.

During the November course DASP piloted two new sessions. The first focused on team building, requiring participants to build an egg transport system that could withstand a 12-foot fall. DASP is happy to report that no eggs were injured during the exercise. All four teams successfully designed systems under tough deadlines and with limited resources, and

drew relevant links to the high-pressure team environment of DARTs and RMTs.

The second session, entitled *Meet MOPLAC*, introduced participants to each of the functional areas on a DART – management, operations, planning, logistics, administration, and communication. The session gave DASP staff members an opportunity to express their creativity by conducting brief skits which walked participants through the different stages of each DART function – from pre-deployment to demobilization.



"I enjoyed the interaction and creativity."

~ DART/RMT Essentials

participant, February 2008

Tom Frey Conveys AFRICOM Wisdom

Tom Frey represented OFDA at US Africa Command (AFRICOM) headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany, from February 23 thru March 8, 2008 to mentor Angela Sherbenou, OFDA's incoming representative to AFRICOM.

Upon arrival, Tom gained an update and renewed understanding of the mission, organizational structure and activities of AFRICOM. Angela arrived Tuesday of the second week, which initiated a whirlwind of meetings, lunches, hallway and sidewalk discussions and introductions with key staff members at all levels within AFRICOM. Tom's goal was to make Angela feel as comfortable as possible about her new

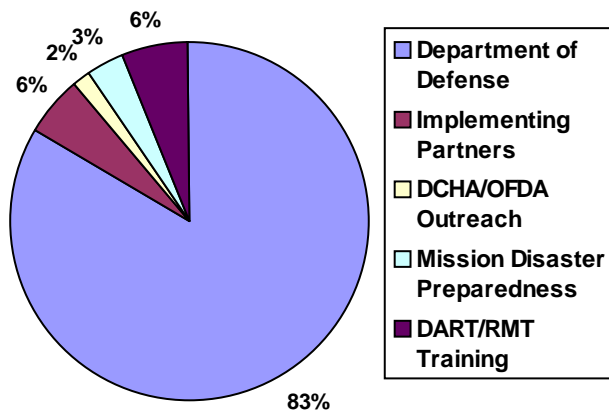
assignment, with a solid understanding of AFRICOM. By the end of the week, almost all of the AFRICOM staff had met Angela or had seen her introduced at meetings. Tom also assisted Angela with the administrative maze associated with in-processing to AFRICOM.

Angela was warmly welcomed at AFRICOM, where staff members were glad to learn that OFDA would have a more permanent presence. As an indicator of the success of Tom's orientation, Angela was sought for advice on draft papers and presentations and her schedule was starting to fill up with follow-on meetings by the end of the week.

Tom's work with AFRICOM paved the way for Angela as OFDA's permanent representative to AFRICOM, where she will continue to have a strong influence on AFRICOM's future humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in Africa.

Tom also continued to support the global priorities of OFDA's Operations Liaison Unit (OLU), assisting with the presentation of four Joint Humanitarian Operations Courses (JHOCs) (January 7 – 19) in Fort Bragg, North Carolina and a review of the JHOC curriculum in Washington, DC (January 28 – January 30).

FOG Proves Popular with DoD



During the last two quarters OFDA received numerous requests for FOGs from colleagues and partners in Washington, DC and around the world. DASP works in conjunction with the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, Idaho and OFDA's Quincy Street warehouse to maintain and disseminate FOGs. A FOG distribution policy helps the DASP to efficiently manage

requests and dispense FOGs appropriately.

During the first two quarters of FY08 a total of 631 FOGs were distributed from NIFC and 95 from OFDA's Quincy stockpile. Over 80% were distributed to the Department of Defense through OFDA's Operations Liaison Unit, mostly in support of various Joint Humanitarian Operations Courses (JHOCs).

Attention to Detailers: Recent Assignments

Core DASP

Mark Rooney (11/14-12/4) served as the DASP Detailer Program Coordinator (DPC). While in Washington D.C., Mark also served as a Communications Specialist for Bangladesh Cyclone Sidr RMT.

Scott "Gus" Malone (12/16-1/30) served as DPC, following Mark Rooney. Gus identified and activated five USFS detailers to participate in the *DART/RMT Essentials* training held in Washington, DC in February 2008.

Scott Dehnisch (9/26-3/21) served in the OFDA/Operations Logistics Shop as a Logistics Specialist. In January, Scott switched functions to serve as DPC, following Gus Malone. Scott helped to design and implement a DASP Operational Orientation to the DASP program for the five detailers who attended *DART/RMT Essentials* training in February.

Chris Knobel (3/13-4/24) covered the DPC position, following Scott Dehnisch. Chris identified and activated seven USFS detailers to participate in the *DART/RMT Essentials* training and subsequent DASP Operational Orientation to be held in Washington, DC in May 2008.

Supporting OFDA

Jennifer Conje (8/20-2/15) assisted OFDA's Sudan Regional Team as a Disaster Operations Specialist.

Justin Jager (11/21-11/30) served on the Bangladesh Cyclone Sidr RMT as a Communications and Records Officer (CRO). Later he served as the CRO for the Ethiopia RMT (12/13-12/14).

Matt Zumstein (11/29-12/12) also served on the Bangladesh RMT as CRO.

Kai Olsen (12/16-1/30) completed his third detail since

2002 in OFDA/Operations/Logistics as a Logistics Specialist.

Douglas Elliot (12/16-1/31) served as a Communications and Records Coordinator (CRC) for the Ethiopia RMT.

Training and Orientation

Five detailers completed *DART/RMT Essentials* training and DASP Operational Orientation in February 2008:

Renee Bishop
Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest

Loren Ingalls
Malheur National Forest

Chris Knobel
Umpqua National Forest

Laura Moser
Coconino National Forest

Jane Rodrigue
Northeast Research Station

DASP Provides Link to Capacity Building

During FY 2008, DASP has been helping to create linkages between OFDA's Regional Teams and technical resources available within the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to facilitate longer-term cooperation and capacity building for disaster management in Europe.

Planning for a Pandemic Flu Response

To enhance global pandemic preparedness, President Bush announced the International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza (IPAPI) in his remarks to the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on September 14, 2005. As of December 2007, the U.S. Government's total commitment to fighting avian and pandemic influenza was \$629 million, with an overall USAID commitment of \$352 million for these efforts globally.

Through the IPAPI, nations and international organizations collaborate to improve international readiness in key areas. All partners have endorsed a core set of principles focused on enhancing preparedness, prevention, response, and containment activities. The Partnership will build on and support ongoing domestic, bilateral, and multilateral avian and pandemic influenza programs.

As one part of this effort, DASP has supported OFDA's Technical Assistance Group (TAG) to develop an OFDA pandemic influenza response framework.

Lead by Heather Papowitz in the TAG's Health Team, the framework aims to outline specific plans for mobilizing OFDA resources in the event of pandemic, assuming that transportation and accessibility will be limited.



The spread of a highly pathogenic avian H5N1 virus across eastern Asia and into Europe and Africa has health professionals concerned about a potential human pandemic.

Collaboration Helps Refine IAS ConOps

In the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the U.S. Government (USG) received over 150 offers of assistance from foreign governments. In the midst of the crisis, OFDA worked with the Department of State (DOS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to develop an ad-hoc process for managing these offers.

Subsequently, the USG established policies and procedures for handling international assistance in the United States. These policies and procedures are outlined in

the International Assistance System Concept of Operations (IAS ConOps).

DASP has played an integral role in developing the IAS ConOps, which received clearance from all relevant Federal agencies in September 2007. The system was tested in a national exercise called TopOff4 in October 2007.

Over the past 6 months, DASP core staff member Laura Chapman and DASP/METI sub-contractor Sonja Nieuwejaar have

worked with USAID, DOS, FEMA and the Department of Defense (DOD) to refine the system and related procedures. Activities underway include:

- A revised version of the CONOPS that incorporates lessons learned during TopOff4;

- Discussions with DOD concerning the use of a military base as a Regional Distribution Center;

- Preparing the IAS ConOps for external distribution;

- Input into the National Response Framework focused on the International Coordination Support Annex; and

- A variety of briefings and information sharing efforts.

For additional information, Sonja can be reached at snieuwejaar@ofda.gov.



New Initiatives Enhance Detailer Readiness

In recent months, DASP has undertaken several new initiatives to build the strength of our existing detailer program.

In December and January, DASP developed a new operational orientation for the prospective detailers who traveled to Washington, DC to participate in OFDA's *DART/RMT Essentials* training in February. These five detailers extended their stay in Washington, DC, by several days to receive targeted briefings from DASP, OFDA and Forest Service colleagues.

The orientation included extensive walking tours of the Ronald Reagan Building (RRB), the Yates Building, Franklin Court, 1201 Pennsylvania, and the South

Agriculture Building. Detailers had the opportunity for a lengthy discussion with DASP's Cognizant Technical Officers (CTOs) in OFDA, and were delighted to receive a special welcome from Gail Kimball, Chief of the Forest Service.

The detailers capped off their visit with a security briefing, which allowed them to receive their RRB building badges before their departure. These detailers are now fully operational and ready for an OFDA assignment with no administrative processing delays.

DASP plans to replicate February's successful

orientation following the upcoming *DART/RMT Essentials* course in May 2008.

In February, DASP developed formal guidelines for detailers seeking to obtain or retain "Active Status" in our on-call cadre. The guidelines stipulate training and security clearance requirements, and establish that detailers must complete at least one assignment every five years to remain active.

The new guidelines will help DASP to ensure detailer readiness and availability, and will give us a better sense of the depth of our current pool of detailers who are currently ready to accept an assignment.



During their Operational Orientation, five DASP detailers received a warm welcome from Forest Service Chief Abigail Kimball.

DASP Advises on Cross-Border Initiatives

Launched in 2005, the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) is a trilateral initiative between the United States, Canada and Mexico outlining objectives for cross-border health initiatives, law enforcement and North American emergency management, among other activities.

The SPP recognizes that a disaster in one North American



country can have consequences across national borders, and may demand a common approach. Recent experience with hurricanes, ice storms, industrial accidents and the like demonstrate interdependencies, as well as the need for coordination and mutual assistance in protecting and safekeeping populations.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was named as the lead for the SPP's emergency management objectives, and OFDA was brought into discussions on cross-border mutual assistance. In recent months, DASP/METI sub-contractor Sonja Nieuwejaar has provided technical assistance to OFDA by commenting on bilateral

agreements between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico and providing advisory support.

Since last fall, the direction of the SPP's emergency management initiative has been focused on updating the 1980 and 1986 emergency management agreements with Mexico and Canada and reinvigorating bilateral consultative committees. If the focus returns to OFDA's role in cross border emergency management issues in the future, DASP may help OFDA review policy options, including a menu of response options.

Additional information about the SPP can be found at the program's homepage: <http://www.spp.gov/>.

Hocklander's True Grit, now in Ethiopia

2002 and progressed into the Detailer Program Coordinator position, building his international humanitarian experience along the way.

Scott always showed keen insights and excellent judgment in his work, both in the field and in Washington, DC. As a former smokejumper from the Bureau

In early November, 2007, DASP bid farewell to stalwart staff member Scott Hocklander. Scott came to the DASP as a part-time graduate student in